

The presence of a carbon monoxide alarm in your home can save your life in the event of a CO buildup. Here are some safety tips for protecting your family from carbon monoxide:

- * Install at least one UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed carbon monoxide detector with an audible warning signal near the sleeping areas of your home. Carbon monoxide alarms measure levels of CO over time and are designed to sound an alarm before an average healthy adult would experience symptoms. It's very possible that you may not be experiencing symptoms when you hear the alarm, but this does not mean that CO isn't present.
- * Have a qualified professional check all fuel-burning appliances, furnaces, venting and chimney systems at least once a year.
- * Never use your range or oven to help heat your home and never use a charcoal grill or hibachi in your home or garage.
- * Never keep a car running in a garage. Even if the garage doors are open, normal circulation will not provide enough fresh air to reliably prevent a dangerous buildup of carbon monoxide.
- * When purchasing an existing home, have a qualified technician evaluate the integrity of the heating and cooking systems, as well as the sealed spaces between the garage and house. The presence of a carbon monoxide alarm in your home can save your life in the event of a CO buildup.

*Protect Yourself and Your Family
from an Invisible Killer:*
CARBON MONOXIDE!



STATE OF
NEW JERSEY
James E. McGreevey
Governor



DIVISION OF
FIRE SAFETY
Lawrence Petrillo
Director



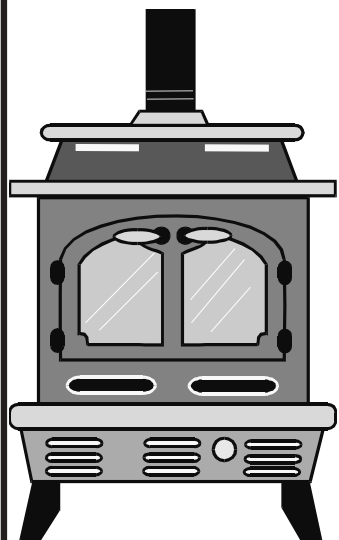
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
Susan Bass Levin
Commissioner

WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)?

Carbon Monoxide, or CO, is a colorless, tasteless and odorless gas. Because it can't be seen, tasted or smelled, its toxic fumes can kill you before you are even aware that it is present in your home. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu, with symptoms that include headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health, and the concentration and length of exposure.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY CO EACH YEAR?

It's difficult to estimate the total number of carbon monoxide incidents because the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning resemble so many other common ailments. The U.S. Fire Administration estimates that carbon monoxide poisoning claims about 200 lives in America each year and sends another 10,000 people to hospital emergency rooms for treatment. Consumer Reports magazine states that CO kills about 500 Americans and sends 10,000 to emergency rooms every year. And according to the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), 1,500 people die annually due to accidental carbon monoxide exposure, and an additional 10,000 seek medical attention.



WHERE DOES CARBON MONOXIDE COME FROM?

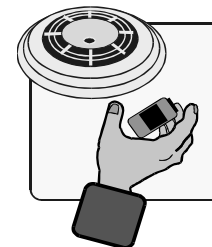
Carbon monoxide is produced during the incomplete combustion of fuels such as natural gas, oil, gasoline, coal, wood and kerosene. The gas may originate from your furnace, fireplace, stove, hot water heater, barbeque grill, automobile, or any other fuel-burning source. The danger increases in the winter months as heaters are used more frequently and fresh air ventilation is minimized by closed windows and doors. Carbon monoxide can also seep into homes through poorly maintained or blocked chimneys. Warming up automobiles in an attached garage, even with the garage door open, can allow concentrated amounts of CO to enter your home through the carport door or nearby windows.

WHY IS CARBON MONOXIDE SO DANGEROUS?

When inhaled, carbon monoxide is absorbed into the bloodstream about 200 times as fast as oxygen, and forms a toxic compound known as carboxyhemoglobin (COHb), which displaces the oxygen in our bloodstreams and results in damage that is proportional to exposure levels. Low exposure levels result in flu or cold-like symptoms - shortness of breath, mild headaches and nausea. Moderate exposure levels cause these symptoms to become more severe - dizziness, mental confusion, severe headaches, increased nausea, and fainting. High levels of exposure to carbon monoxide can cause loss of consciousness and death. Medical experts believe that unborn babies, infants, children, senior citizens and people with heart or lung problems are at greater risk of CO poisoning.

HOW CAN I REDUCE THE RISK OF CO POISONING?

Make sure your home has a carbon monoxide detector, especially if you have fuel-burning appliances or an attached garage. Be sure to install and maintain the detector according to the manufacturer's instructions, to replace the batteries as necessary, check the detector monthly by pressing the test button, and to replace the detector itself every five years.



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE ALARM SOUNDS ON MY CO DETECTOR?

What you do when your CO alarm sounds depends on whether anyone is feeling ill or not. If no one feels ill, silence the alarm, shut down all possible sources of combustion (furnace, fireplace, portable heater, etc.), ventilate the house with fresh air by opening windows and doors, and call a qualified professional (your utility provider, a heating contractor, or your local fire department) to investigate the source of the carbon monoxide. If illness is a factor, evacuate all occupants from your home immediately, notify your local fire department, and get medical help immediately.

